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News Release

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County Executive Gardner Unveils One-Stop Severe Weather Communications Webpage and Citizen Portal

FREDERICK, MD – County Executive Jan Gardner today unveiled a new one-stop webpage that will provide citizens with timely information and resources during a major winter storm when the county receives several feet of snow, not the more typical one to three inches. She also announced a newly developed citizen portal to report concerns online.

“Our new webpage and the digital tools are easy to use and will replace our current homepage during severe winter events when our Emergency Operations Center is in full operation,” said Executive Gardner. “I commend county employees for developing these helpful online resources.”

At her request, employees in the Emergency Management Division, Interagency Information Technologies (IIT) Division, Public Works Division and others developed the severe weather communications tools. The webpage will provide updates on road conditions and weather, maps and tools to find out who maintains roads, details on the status of county services and photos of conditions across the county. The webpage is designed to work well on smart phones, tablets and home computers.

The citizen portal, developed by IIT’s Geographic Information Systems, allows someone to report a storm-related problem by location. Other concerns posted across the county will be accessible and citizens can upload photos to illustrate their road conditions or other difficulties.

Frequently asked questions will be available online. Those questions include: when will roads be plowed, who is responsible for plowing roads, what to do if there is an emergency before a road is cleared and how does the county decide which roads to clear first.

While the new technology tools will be available primarily for severe winter storms, more traditional methods of communication have also been enhanced and improved, such as the Highway Operations Bureau call center, available at 301-600-1564. The bureau has also upgraded its response to winter weather through pre-treatment of county roads with brine, a mixture of salt and water that adheres to roads more efficiently than salt alone, providing better traction for vehicles. Use of the brine also saves taxpayer costs on salt and other supplies.

Executive Gardner encouraged citizens to watch a new watch a new public service announcement titled, “Winter Tips,” at www.tinyurl.com/FrederickCountySnowTips. She also asked residents and businesses to sign up for emergency notices at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/ALERT.

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